

"what did you do?"

"first we all stuffed ourselves on macaroni salad,
even though i, believe it or not,
was the least obese person in the place.
then we played 'newlywed games.'
like 'according to government statistics,
how often does the average husband hug his wife
after one, two, five, ten, twenty-five
years of marriage?'"

"what was the answer?"

"what would you have guessed?"

"i would have started low
and dropped off steeply."

"you would have won the grand prize:
an assortment of evangelical bumper stickers."

A BIT CLOSE TO HOME

a friend of mine,
judy seal, wrote a poem
about her salvadoran babysitter
telling of having watched death squads
burst into classrooms
and machine gun her professors.

she admitted the professors
were generally not sympathetic to the regime
and that the guerillas were sometimes guilty
of deliberately staging shootouts where civilians
were sure to be caught in the crossfire.
nonetheless i think the blowing-away of professors
in mid-lecture
is a serious violation
of academic freedom.

THE TEST

my youngest daughter and my youngest son
think, like siblings everywhere,
that they hate each other.
the older often announces, matter-of-factly,
that she wishes the younger were dead.

the younger does his best
to drive his sister nuts.

but when my son tripped in the clothing store
and cut his head open on a metal rack
and we had to rush him to emergency,

his sister said, "i was terrified!
i guess maybe i do love him."

PRIORITIZING

when my wife reminds me
that i have offered to take my daughter
to the library
at the same time that the lakers
happen to be on against the celtics,

i heroically proclaim:

"my children mean more to me
than any dumb basketball game."

of course, it isn't the playoffs yet.

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

in the midst of the football telecast
a courtesy acknowledgment of the minor sports
was read:

"ucla's powerful soccer team
hosts usf tomorrow at noon
in the santa ana bowl
parking lot."

jesus, i thought, and to think the football players
complain about playing on astroturf.

a minute later, a slightly altered announcement
took precedence:

"ucla's powerful soccer team
hosts usf at noon tomorrow
in the santa ana bowl ...
and parking will be free."